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ABSTRACT

These guidelines provide recommendations for certifying precollegiate teachers of civics, government, and social studies. The guidelines are intended for reference and use by: (1) colleges and universities with programs that certify elementary, middle, and high school social studies, civics and government teachers; (2) state education agencies that establish standards for certifying or licensing these teachers; (3) agencies that evaluate and accredit teacher education programs; (4) professional organizations for precollege teachers; (5) organizations that are examining and proposing reforms in precollegiate education; and (6) political science departments in colleges and universities who are responsible, wholly or in part, for providing courses to be taken by teachers seeking certification in social studies, civics and government. Specific objectives and course recommendations are listed for preparation and certification of elementary and secondary school teachers of civics and government. (EH) (EH)

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ED 460 885

APSA Guidelines for Teacher Training

Recommendations from the American Political Science Association for Certifying Precollegiate Teachers of Civics, Government and Social Studies

Objectives

When the American Political Science Association held its second Annual Meeting in 1905, a major presentation was "What Do Entering College Freshmen Know About American Government Before Taking College Courses in Political Science?" From that time on, the Association has maintained standing committees and projects devoted to precollegiate education in civics, government, and politics. This is as it should be: citizenship education is a primary objective of American schooling, and political science is the core subject of civic literacy and competence.

The increasing concern over the competence of teachers and the preparation of students to participate fully and knowledgeably in American society now prompts the APSA to respond to requests for its recommendations regarding the certification of teachers of government, politics, and civics in secondary schools. The recognition that education must provide the foundation for students' academic skills and civic competency should also be addressed by recommendations as to the preparation of the elementary and secondary teachers who first introduce the study of American values and institutions.

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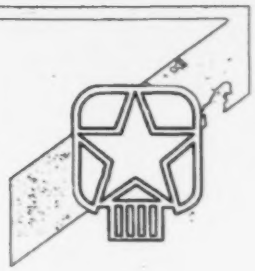

Audiences

Who May Use These Guidelines

The guidelines have been prepared by the Association's Education Committee in consultation with many other faculty in political science and colleges of education. The guidelines are for reference and use by the following organizations responsible for designing curricula and training and certifying teachers:

- Colleges and universities with programs that certify elementary, middle and high school social studies, civics and government teachers
- State education agencies that establish standards for certifying or licensing social studies, civics and government teachers
- Agencies that evaluate and accredit teacher education programs
- Professional organizations for precollege teachers, particularly the National Council for the Social Studies, and the regional and state councils for the social studies
- Organizations that are examining and proposing reforms in precollegiate education
- Political science departments in colleges and universities who are responsible, wholly or in part, for providing the courses to be taken by teachers seeking certification in social studies, civics and government

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Course Recommendations

For teachers of secondary school civics and government courses, notably American government and comparative government, the following courses are recommended.

Courses in Political Science

Primary Courses

◦ Introduction to American Government and Politics	1 - 2 semesters
◦ Introduction to Comparative Government and Politics	1 semester
◦ International Relations	1 semester
◦ Political Theory	1 semester

Recommended Courses

◦ Advanced courses in American government and politics and public law, including state and local government	2 - 3 semesters (for a total of 4 semesters in American government and politics, including the introductory course)
◦ Courses in comparative politics (which should include developing and non-western countries as well as European nations.)	2 semesters
◦ Political Theory/Philosophy	1 - 2 semesters

In selecting these courses, prospective secondary school civics and government teachers are strongly encouraged to gain exposure to (a) the philosophical issues of political democracy and democratic citizenship; (b) the cultural, ethnic, gender, racial, and other sources of pluralism of American political life; and (c) methods of political science data analysis.

Related Subjects of Study

Many middle and high school teachers of civics and government will be responsible for teaching courses in history, economics, and the other social sciences. To prepare them to do so, selected course work from at least three of the following disciplines is recommended: history, economics, geography, sociology, anthropology, and psychology.

Professional Education/Teacher Training

Secondary school civics, government and social studies teachers should receive training in instructional strategies and practices and in the application of these strategies to the presentation of specific subjects in government and politics.

Preparation of Elementary School Teachers

Citizenship education is an important component of elementary education. Our very youngest students receive their first formal instruction in democratic values, cooperation, and participation in their school and community. Early schooling should introduce young students to the norms of American constitutional order and to the ways in which participation in American democracy has been expanded.

Students in the upper primary grades receive their first instruction in American history and the foundations of American democracy and in their state's history and government. Political science training will give elementary teachers the concepts and context needed to introduce these topics.

Elementary school teachers are advised to take at least two semesters of political science, but four semesters are preferable. At least one semester of American Government and Politics should be required, and courses in comparative government and politics and state and local government are recommended.

Certification of Secondary School Teachers of Civics and Government

Political Science

Teachers of civics and government in particular, and also of social studies, are advised to pursue a major in political science. The undergraduate political science major shares the objective of precollege civics and social studies instruction, namely "...[T]o maximize students' capacity to analyze and interpret the significance and dynamics of political events and governmental processes ... [t]o equip them for coping with political events and governmental actions and problems in the future. 'Coping with' in this context means not merely to understand, or to manage their effects on society and on them individually, but also to evaluate and seek to shape them."*

The political science major includes courses on democratic theory, constitutional democracy, and political institutions and processes that are the core of precollege instruction on civics and government. Moreover, the subjects and skills of a political science major are compatible with a broader social sciences/social studies perspective. As a discipline, political science encompasses methods of inquiry of the cognate social science disciplines and encourages its majors to elect courses in these disciplines. For the future teacher, historical analysis is a valuable tool for political science courses and for a minor. A pre-service teacher majoring in political science who minors in history should be qualified to teach history as well as civics and government.

Political science students study American government as well as comparative, multicultural, and international perspectives on political life. Their training emphasizes mastery of written and oral communications skills and analytical skills which precollege teachers of civics and social studies recognize as fundamental to their instructional objectives.

While a major in political science is recommended, the prospective teacher should have at least a minor in political science with the following recommended courses in political science. The distribution of courses should include Introductory American Government, assure exposure to major subfields in political science, and provide some study in depth in American politics and comparative politics through advanced courses.

*For a full description of the objectives and attributes of the political science major, see John C. Wahlke, "Liberal Learning and the Political Science Major," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 24 (March, 1991) pp. 48-60. (Available from APSA upon request: (202) 483-2512.)

> ***"The development of socially effective and democratically oriented citizens has been a traditional objective of civic education. While it is difficult to specify all the component elements of a capacity to participate effectively and democratically in politics, they clearly seem to include: (a) an interest in public affairs and some sense of "public regardedness"; (b) an ability to tolerate conflict and divergent values and beliefs; (c) an ability to consider in particular situations the democratic basis, the feasibility, and the likely consequences of alternative courses of action; (d) an ability to look at the viewpoints and problems of others; (e) an ability to identify alternative courses of action and to assess the probability that the alternative selected will achieve the desired goals; (f) an ability to consider group factors and institutional implications of decisions; (g) an ability to consider relevant democratic principles and values involved in decisions."*** **

**Committee on Pre-Collegiate Education, "Political Education in the Public Schools: the Challenge for Political Science." *PS* 4 (Summer 1971), p.437.

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The American Political Science Association is the major professional society for people who study politics and government and the largest political science society in the world. While most APSA members teach and conduct research in colleges and universities in the U.S., one-fourth work outside academe in government, research organizations, consulting firms, the news media, and private enterprise. One-tenth of the members are from over 70 other countries.

The APSA promotes communication and professional development devoted to research and teaching. Activities of particular interest include:

- An Annual Meeting in which thousands of scholar/teachers exchange information about research and teaching
- Publication of the leading journal of scholarly research, *The American Political Science Review*
- Publication of the quarterly professional news journal, *PS: Political Science & Politics*, which features articles on teaching resources and methods
- Projects devoted to teaching, including Project '87 and The Bill of Rights Education Collaborative, both cosponsored by the American Historical Association
- Publications devoted to resources for teachers, including: *Ideas of the Founders on Constitutional Government; Lessons on the Constitution: Supplements for High School Courses in American History, Government and Civics;* computer-related instructional units on public opinion, elections, and Congress; the *Political Science Course Syllabi Collections*, including: American Government and Politics, Comparative Government and Politics, International Relations, and many more
- Information for students on careers and the study of political science
- A membership for High School Social Studies Departments that provides *PS*, APSA directories, course syllabi, and career information for students
- Fellowship programs, including the Congressional Fellowship Program and graduate fellowships for African American, Latino and Native American students

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